

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
BUSINESS MEETING
ACTION ITEM**

SUBJECT: Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve Equestrian Use Update

ELECTION DISTRICT(S): Little River

STAFF CONTACT(S): Jeremy Payne, Parks, Recreation and Community Services
Steve Torpy, Parks, Recreation and Community Services

PURPOSE: To request that the Board of Supervisors (Board) approve the recommended 8.3 miles of trails be converted within the existing trail system for equestrian use at Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve (BRNP).

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Staff: Staff recommends that the Board approve the proposed Amendments to the Addendum to the BRNP Master Plan to permit equestrian use of 8.3 miles of trails which are identified on the BRNP Proposed Equestrian Trails Map (Attachment 1).

BACKGROUND: At the [May 7, 2024](#), Board Business Meeting, the Board voted (7-0-2: Kershner and Saines absent) to direct staff to hire an independent contractor to assess the trail system for equestrian use within the BRNP. The Board further directed staff to include a contract term directing the contractor to conduct a baseline inventory of any designated areas (trails) found to be appropriate for equestrian use.

At the [June 17, 2025](#) Board Business Meeting, the Board voted (6-0-3: Kershner, Letourneau, and Saines absent) to approve Option 4 and directed staff to update the language of the BRNP Master Plan to include the specific equestrian trails.

The Board also directed staff to conduct further assessments, within the requested period of 12 months, and to obtain additional equestrian trail mileage within the BRNP in accordance with prevailing guidance and existing restrictions, including the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF) Deed of Gift of Open Space Easement.

From September through December 2025, Parks, Recreation and Community Services (PRCS) staff and Fina Trails, an independent trails assessment contractor, evaluated all the trails in the BRNP and identified an additional 4.5 miles of trails that could be modified to meet the standard for equestrian usage. In January 2026, a proposal (Attachment 2) was sent to VOF outlining the

8.3 total trail miles recommended for equestrian usage. This report included information on any trail modification or rerouting that would be necessary to accommodate equestrian use.

On March 20, 2026, staff received a letter (Attachment 3) from VOF stating that the proposal for equestrian use on 8.3 miles of trails within the BRNP was consistent with the terms of the recorded open-space easement. Staff thereafter began updating the language of the BRNP Master Plan (Attachment 4) to include the specific equestrian trails outlined in the proposal, reflecting these changes as Amendments to the Addendum (Attachment 5).

Considerable pre-work has been completed by staff to ensure the trails, once approved, may be installed as quickly as possible. The pre-work included coordination with a fencing contractor to finalize details for gate installation at the BRNP eastern gate and the Evergreen Mills Trailhead, which will serve as the primary parking and access points for equestrian use. Staff has also created a signage plan for the new trail system which includes an updated BRNP map and a dedicated equestrian trail map. In anticipation of questions from the public, staff has developed website content related to the BRNP equestrian trails and general equestrian usage. Finally, staff has coordinated with the Office of Emergency Management, Safety and Security who will be assisting with staff training, communication protocols, and coordination with emergency services regarding emergency preparedness surrounding equestrian use at the BRNP.

At this time, staff plans to work on installing certain aspects of the new equestrian trail system, adjusting existing trails, and beginning the installation of signage. The estimated timeline, weather permitting, for opening of the proposed 8.3 miles is the end of the calendar year. This will ensure that the trails crew can continue its work on other trail segments around the County that are part of the ongoing implementation of the Loudoun Trails and Waterways Plan.

ISSUES: There are no issues associated with this item.

FISCAL IMPACT: There is no fiscal impact, as all trail improvements can be completed with a combination of existing staff within the PRCS trails crew, volunteer work, and funding contained within PRCS's existing budget.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. The Board may approve to allow equestrian usage at BRNP and adopt the proposed Amendments to the Addendum to the BRNP Master Plan.
2. The Board may approve to allow equestrian usage at BRNP and adopt the proposed Amendments to the Addendum to the BRNP Master Plan, with revisions.
3. The Board may not approve to allow equestrian usage at BRNP and the proposed Amendments to the Addendum to the BRNP Master Plan, and direct staff on how to proceed.

DRAFT MOTIONS:

1. I move that Board of Supervisors adopt the Amendments to the Addendum to the Banshee Reeks Master Plan, as shown in Attachment 5, allowing for equestrian usage on the 8.3 miles of trails reflected in Attachment 1, and direct staff to perform the necessary work on the trails to meet PRCS standards for equestrian usage.

OR

2. I move an alternate motion.

ATTACHMENT(S):

1. Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve – Proposed Equestrian Trails Map
2. Trails Proposal to Virginia Outdoors Foundation
3. Virginia Outdoors Foundation Letter of Approval
4. Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve Master Plan (updated April 2026)
5. Amendments to the Addendum to the Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve Master Plan